

*Virtual hearing offers citizens the opportunity to comment on local needs and priorities*

(Washington DC) – In an effort to provide an unprecedented level of transparency around the appropriations process and to best meet the pressing needs of his constituents, Congressman Walz will host a virtual hearing on his website ( [walz.house.gov](http://walz.house.gov) ) starting Friday morning at 9am. Walz will post all qualified applications he received from local governments and non-profit organizations for FY2011 federal funding on his website and ask residents of southern Minnesota to provide comments. Walz is the first and only member of Congress to publicly solicit comment on so-called ‘earmark’ applications before he makes a decision about which projects he will seek to help fund.

“This year, as in previous years, I will request federal funding for local projects of critical importance through the appropriations process,” said Walz. “I intend to request funding this year for projects that will create jobs through investments in southern Minnesota and will have a transformative impact on the region. I’m looking for help from my constituents in determining which of the nearly 100 applications I received would potentially have the largest impact on the communities of southern Minnesota.”

Walz continues to work with his colleagues to create jobs, rein in the deficit and bring the federal budget into balance. He notes that Congressional earmarks do not add to the federal deficit.

Any funds not reserved for specific projects

through the Congressional earmark process would instead be left for federal bureaucrats in Washington to distribute, in accordance with federal law, as they see fit.

“I support an open, accountable, and transparent appropriations process because I think it is critically important that the people of southern Minnesota have a say in how their taxpayer dollars are spent in our community,” continued Walz. “I am committed to the unprecedented transparency of a virtual hearing because I believe the best decisions are well-informed decisions. I am looking forward to hearing the positives and the negatives and about our greatest needs and highest priorities. We cannot fund all of these projects, so I am counting on southern Minnesotans to take some ownership of the important decisions I will soon be making on their behalf.

All applicants were required to have their completed application submitted no later than 5pm central on February 26. **Because of the quickly approaching deadline for Walz to submit his final list of requests to the House Appropriations Committee, comments must be received through his website between 9 a.m. central on Friday, March 5 and 5p.m. central on Thursday, March 11 in order to be considered in the decision making process.**

Comments submitted after the deadline are welcome, but the Congressman may not have adequate time to review them. The final list of projects Congressman Walz requests funding for will be posted at

[walz.house.gov](http://walz.house.gov)

on Friday, March 19

th

in accordance with House rules.

Each requesting entity completed an application that outlined the following three requirements established by Walz. Additionally, applicants must be either a government entity or a non-profit

organization. Walz does not make appropriations requests on behalf of for-profit corporations or individuals.

- **Transparency and Accountability**

The potential recipient must be of high ethical standards and committed to providing additional information to the southern Minnesotans in the future about the project, its progress, and be accountable to taxpayers for how their tax dollars are being spent.

- **Job Creation and/or Transformative Impact**

Congressman Walz is interested in supporting projects that will create jobs and/or have a transformative impact on the region. He is also interested in projects that are eligible for federal funds through the appropriations process but will not require annual federal financial support to be successful.

- **Public support**

The more public support from local elected leaders, community officials, and from citizens in southern Minnesota project requestors can demonstrate for a project, the better the chance that Congressman Walz will submit it to the House Appropriations Committee for consideration.

After considering the comments sent through [walz.house.gov](https://walz.house.gov), Walz will decide which projects to submit to the House Appropriations Committee for consideration. Additionally, Walz will publicly release all projects he requested, as he has done since being elected. Projects Walz previously obtained funding for can be reviewed [here](#).

Please note: if funding is requested for a particular project from the House Appropriations Committee, it does not guarantee funding nor is there any guarantee that the project will receive the dollar amount requested. Therefore, Congressman Walz encourages all applicants continue to pursue all potential funding sources for support of each project.

To share your comments with Congressman Walz and participate in the virtual hearing, please [click here](#)

.

-30-